

CLAIMS

It is claimed:

- 1 1. A method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device, the local device including an input device and an
3 output device, the local device accessing an online server associated with the online
4 service and providing interaction with the online service, the method comprising:
 - 5 a) the client application activating;
 - 6 b) the client application commencing an online session with the online server;
7 the online server transmitting sponsorship data to the client application, the
8 sponsorship data comprising a sponsorship object including a resource locator
9 associated with a sponsorship label to be displayed and a resource locator associated
10 with a click-through of the sponsorship label;
 - 11 c) the client application causing a client window to be displayed on the output
12 device;
 - 13 d) the client application displaying a sponsorship label on the client window,
14 the sponsorship label comprising a hypertext link, wherein, when the user clicks through
15 on the sponsorship label, the client application causes the local device to access the
16 resource locator associated with a click-through of the sponsorship label;

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17 e) the client application causing a first advertisement to be displayed in the
18 client window, wherein the client application retrieves the first advertisement from a
19 memory cache local to the local device;

20 f) the online server transmitting a second advertisement to the client
21 application;

22 g) the client application causing the second advertisement to be displayed in
23 the client window.

1 2. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the client application
3 commences an online session by establishing a communication channel via a public
4 switched telephone network from the local device to the online server.

1 3. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the client application
3 commencing an online session comprises:

4 a) the client application transmitting a request to the online server to authorize
5 the local device to interact with a web server;

6 b) the online server providing authorization for the local device to interact with

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7 the web server.

1 4. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the resource locator associated
3 with the click-through of the sponsorship label comprises a uniform resource locator
4 associated with an Internet web page.

1 5. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the sponsorship label is located
3 on a title bar of the client window.

1 6. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 1, wherein the second advertisement is
3 included within a play list, comprising at least one ad object, each ad object comprising
4 a resource locator for a given advertisement, a resource locator for a click-through
5 associated with the given advertisement, and at least one display attribute for the given
6 advertisement, the first play list further specifying an order in which the advertisements
7 identified in the play list are to be displayed.

1 7. A method of displaying sponsorship information to a user of an online service
2 using a client application on a local device, the local device including an input device

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3 and an output device, the local device accessing an online server associated with the
4 online service and providing interaction with the online service, the method comprising:

5 a) the client application activating;

6 b) the client application commencing an online session with the online server;

7 c) the online server transmitting sponsorship data to the client application, the
8 sponsorship data comprising a sponsorship object including a resource locator
9 associated with a sponsorship label to be displayed;

10 d) the client application causing a client window to be displayed on the output
11 device;

12 e) the client application causing a sponsorship label to be displayed on the
13 client window, the sponsorship label comprising a hypertext link associated with a
14 resource locator to be accessed if a user clicks on the sponsorship label;

15 f) the client application retrieving a first advertisement from a memory cache
16 local to the local device;

17 g) the client application causing the first advertisement to be displayed in the
18 client window.

1 8. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a

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2 client application on a local device of claim 7, additionally comprising the online server
3 transmitting a second advertisement to the local device and the client application
4 causing the second advertisement to be displayed in the client window.

1 9. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 7, wherein the client application
3 commences an online session by establishing a communication channel via a public
4 switched telephone network from the local device to the online server.

1 10. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 7, wherein the client application
3 commencing an online session comprises:

4 a) the client application transmitting a request to the online server to authorize
5 the local device to interact with a web server;

6 b) the online server providing authorization for the local device to interact with
7 the web server.

1 11. A system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service,
2 the user utilizing the online service with a local device, wherein the local device
3 displays advertisements from the online service the system comprising a computer

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4 program product comprising a computer usable medium having software for causing the
5 local device to:

6 a) commence an online session with an online server;

7 b) display a client window on an output device of the local device;

8 c) obtain sponsorship data from the online server, the sponsorship data
9 comprising a sponsorship object including a resource locator associated with a
10 sponsorship label to be displayed;

11 d) display a sponsorship label on the client window, the sponsorship label
12 comprising a hypertext link associated with a resource locator to be accessed if a user
13 clicks on the sponsorship label;

14 e) retrieve a first advertisement from a memory cache local to the local
15 device;

16 f) display the first advertisement in the client window.

1 12. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 11, the software further for causing the local device to obtain a second
3 advertisement from the online server and further for causing the local device to display
4 the second advertisement in the client window.

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1 13. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 11, wherein the local device commences an online session by establishing a
3 communication channel via a public switched telephone network from the local device
4 to the online server.

1 14. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 11, wherein the client application causes the local device to commence an
3 online session by causing the local device to transmit a request to the online server to
4 authorize the local device to interact with a web server.

1 15. A system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service,
2 the user utilizing the online service with a local device, wherein the local device
3 displays advertisements from the online service the system comprising a computer
4 program product comprising a computer usable medium having software for causing the
5 local device to:

6 a) commence an online session with the online server;

7 b) obtain sponsorship data from an online server, the sponsorship data
8 comprising a sponsorship object including a resource locator associated with a
9 sponsorship label to be displayed and a resource locator associated with a click-through

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10 of the sponsorship label;

11 c) display a client window on the output device;

12 d) display a sponsorship label on the client window, the sponsorship label
13 comprising a hypertext link, wherein, when the user clicks through on the sponsorship
14 label, the client application causes the local device to access the resource locator
15 associated with a click-through of the sponsorship label;

16 e) retrieve a first advertisement from a local memory cache;

17 f) display the first advertisement in the client window;

18 g) obtain a second advertisement from the online server;

19 h) display the second advertisement in the client window.

1 16. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 15, wherein the local device commences an online session by establishing a
3 communication channel via a public switched telephone network from the local device
4 to the online server.

1 17. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 15, wherein the client application causes the local device to commence an

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3 online session by causing the local device to transmit a request to the online server to
4 authorize the local device to interact with a web server.

1 18. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 15, wherein the resource locator associated with the click-through of the
3 sponsorship label comprises a uniform resource locator associated with an Internet web
4 page.

1 19. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 15, wherein the sponsorship label is located on a title bar of the client window.

1 20. The system for selecting advertisements for display to a user of an online service
2 of claim 15, wherein the second advertisement is included within a play list, comprising
3 at least one ad object, each ad object comprising a resource locator for a given
4 advertisement, a resource locator for a click-through associated with the given
5 advertisement, and at least one display attribute for the given advertisement, the first
6 play list further specifying an order in which the advertisements identified in the play
7 list are to be displayed.

1 21. A method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device, the local device including an input device and an

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3 output device, the user using the local device for accessing an online server and a web
4 server associated with the online service, the method comprising the steps of:

5 a) the client application commencing an online session by establishing a
6 communication channel from the local device to the online server;

7 b) the client application displaying a client window on the output device of the
8 local device;

9 c) the client application causing at least one advertisement to be displayed in
10 the client window;

11 d) the user using the input device to interact with the client window and thereby
12 access data from the web server;

13 e) the client application monitoring the user's interaction with the client
14 window and assembling a usage history for the user based on the user's interaction, the
15 usage history being descriptive of the subject matter of the data that the user accessed
16 from the web server;

17 f) the client application receiving an instruction from the user to terminate the
18 online session;

19 g) the client application displaying an exit window on the output device of the
20 local device, wherein the exit window includes an advertisement box associated with an

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21 exit window advertisement;

22 h) the online server identifying an exit window advertisement for display to the
23 user based upon the usage history, wherein a subject matter of the exit window
24 advertisement is related to the subject matter described in the usage history;

25 i) the online server transmitting instructions to the local device to display the
26 exit window advertisement in the advertisement box of the exit window;

27 j) the client application causing the exit window advertisement to be displayed
28 in the advertisement box of the exit window.

1 22. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 21, further comprising the client application
3 providing the user with the option to cancel the instruction to terminate the online
4 session.

1 23. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 21, wherein the exit window advertisement
3 is associated with a resource locator, and further comprising:

4 a) the user performing a click-through on the exit window advertisement using
5 the input device of the local device;

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6 b) the client application causing the resource locator associated with the exit
7 window advertisement to be loaded in a browser window;

8 c) the client application canceling the instruction to terminate the online
9 session;

10 d) the client application removing the exit window from the output device.

1 24. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 21, wherein the communication channel
3 comprises a dial-up communication channel.

1 25. The method of displaying advertisements to a user of an online service using a
2 client application on a local device of claim 21, wherein the communication channel
3 comprises a constant connection communication channel, and wherein the client
4 application establishing a communication channel comprises:

5 a) the client application transmitting a request to the online server to authorize
6 the local device to interact with the web server;

7 b) the client application providing authorization for the local device to interact
8 with the web server.